

Message Text

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SUBJECT: LABOR REFORM: GOVT DIALOGUE WITH OPPOSITION LABOR CONTINUES

REF: MADRID 6512

1. FOLLOWING AUGUST 19 AND AUGUST 27 MEETINGS WITH THE
SOCIALIST UGT AND THE SOCIAL CHRISTIAN USO (REFTEL), SYNDICAL
RELATIONS MINISTER ENRIQUE DE LA MATA ROUNDED OUT HIS
INFORMAL AND "PURELY PERSONAL" DIALOGUES WITH LABOR'S
"BIG THREE" BY SITTING DOWN ON SEPT. 7 WITH FIVE LEADERS
OF THE COMMUNIST-DOMAINATED WORKERS' COMMISSIONS/SWC
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(NICOLAR SARTORIUS, CIPRIANO GARCIA, JOSE TORRES,

JOSE LONSO AND LUIS ROYO). SWC HEAD MARCELINO CAMACHO, JUST RETURNED FROM THE SOVIET UNION (MADRID 6473), HAD EARLIER GIVEN THE GREEN LIGHT FOR THE MEETING WITH DE LA MATA DURING A SEPT 3 PRESS CONFERENCE IN MADRID.

2. AS HE HAD DONE WITH UGT AND USO, DE LA MATA EXPLAINED THE GOVT'S PLANNED LABOR REFORM PLANS. ACCORDING TO ONE ACCOUNT, THEY WOULD INCLUDE THE EXPECTED DECREE ON LEGALIZATION OF OPPOSITION TRADE UNIONS, PERHAPS AS EARLY AS NEXT WEEK. ON ITS SIDE, THE SWC GAVE ITS VIEW OF WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN ANY LABOR REFORM, AND REJECTED THE IDEA OF ANY "SOCIAL PACT." THE SWC ALSO STIPULATED THAT FUTURE DIALOGUES WITH THE GOVT TAKE PLACE THROUGH THE COS (COORDINADORA OBERA SINDICAL-THE NATIONAL "UNITY OF ACTION" COORDINATING MECHANISM GROUPING THE UGT, USO AND THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS' COMMISSIONS-SEC).

3. AMONG THE SMALLER OPPOSITION TRADE UNIONS, THE ANARCHO-SYNDICAL CNT (CONFEDERACION NATIONAL DE TRABAJO) ON AUGUST 30 REJECTED AN INVITATION TO MEET WITH THE SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER, NOTING THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD NOT CONFORM WITH THE CNT'S PRESENT PLANS. THE CNT'S COMMUNIQUE ALSO REFERRED TO THE CNT'S NON-POLITICAL STANCE AND ITS "TRULY AUTONOMOUS CHARACTER." JUAN BEITIA, LEADER OF THE DISSIDENT YOUNG TURK FACTION OF THE STV (SOLIDARITY OF BASQUE WORKERS), ON SEPTEMBER 8 CONFIDED TO THE LABATT THAT HE WOULD BE MEETING WITH DE LA MATA "VERY SHORTLY." A DIALOGUE WITH THE BARCELONA-BASED SOC (SOLIDARIDAD DE OBEROS DE CATALUNA) ALSO REMAINS A POSSIBILITY.

4. ON SEPT 8, DE LA MATA MET WITH HIS SSO (SPANISH SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE RESULTS OF HIS MEETINGS WITH OPPOSITION LABOR ELEMENTS. HE STRESSED THAT THE KEY POINTS OF ANY LABOR REFORM MUST BE 1) FREEDOM OF TRADE UNION ASSOCIATION, 2) DISPOSITION OF SSO PATRIMONY, AND 3) JOB SECURITY OF SSO FUNCTIONARIES.

5. DE LA MATA HAS NOT BEEN NEGLECTING HIS INTERNATIONAL FENCE-MEMDING. ON SEPT. 1 HE MET WITH A COUNCIL OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EUROPE DELEGATION TO EXPLAIN SPAIN'S LABOR REFORM PLANS.

6. COMMENT. IT SEEMS QUITE LIKELY THAT IN ANY SECOND ROUND OF MORE FORMAL GOVT-LABOR NEGOTIATIONS ON LABOR REFORM ISSUES, OPPOSITION LABOR ELEMENTS WOULD INDEED SPEAK THROUGH THE COS, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO HOLD ITS FIRST POST-VACATION MEETING ON SEPT 9. AS A USO LEADER TOLD THE EMBASSY FOLLOWING THEIR AUGUST MEETING, LABOR'S

REACTION TO DE LA MATA'S INITIATIVE HAS BEEN LARGELY POSITIVE. THE INCLUSION OF SWC IN THE DIALOGUES IS EVIDENCE THAT DE LA MATA, AND PROBABLY THE GOVT ALSO, RECOGNIZES IT S KEY ROLE IN ANY FUTURE PLURALIST LABOR MOVEMENT. A NOTE OF DISCORD, HOWEVER, CAME FROM DE LA MATA'S OWN SSO WHEN NOEL ZAPICO (PRESIDENT OF THE SSO'S NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WORKERS) ANNOUNCED DEFIANTLY (AUGUST 30) THAT "I AM NOT TIED TO THE MINISTER'S COMMITMENTS WITH THE OPPOSITION LABOR GROUPS."
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